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TAGS: [KNNP](#) [ENRG](#) [ECON](#) [PARM](#) [TRGY](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [KRAD](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA TO HEAD THE FORUM OF NUCLEAR REGULATORY BODIES IN AFRICA

REF: A. ABUJA 2397

[1](#)B. ABUJA 1121

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. On April 10, ESTHOff met with the Director General of the Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NNRA), Professor Shemsiden Elegba, who reported that he has been elected to chair the newly-formed Forum of Regulatory Bodies in Africa (FORBIA). The forum aims to harmonize and strengthen the nuclear safety and security regulatory framework of its members as well as their technical capacity. The new chairman stated that the forum has requested U.S. assistance, through U.S. representatives attending the inaugural meeting, in building the capacity of its member states. He also mentioned that the NNRA, in collaboration with the U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), will hold radiation detection and recovery training for its employees in October. The U.S. Mission recommends continued U.S. engagement with the NNRA and believes such collaboration will have broader impact beyond Nigeria. END SUMMARY.

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New Nuclear Regulatory Body Set Up

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[1](#)2. (U) In an April 10 meeting with ESTHOff, the Director General of the NNRA, Professor Shemsiden Elegba, reported that he was elected the first-ever Chairman of FORBIA at a March 25 meeting held in Pretoria, South Africa. The forum was established to harmonize and strengthen the nuclear safety and security regulatory framework as well as technical capacity of its members. So far, the following countries have signed the forum's charter: Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe. Representatives of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), European Radiation Protection Authorities Network, the Asian Nuclear Safety Network, and International Atomic Energy Agency also attended the launch of the forum and discussed possible future collaboration with the new regional body, Elegba said.

[1](#)3. (U) Elegba reported that an African Thematic Working Group on Regulatory Infrastructure for Nuclear Power Plants was established at the same meeting to enhance the capacity of FORBIA members through greater exchanges of information and technical expertise. The short-term objective of FORBIA is to train a core group of experts that will serve as in-house trainers in regional training courses that the organization intends to offer to its members in the future.

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Request for USG Assistance

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[1](#)4. (U) Elegba stated that the working group has, through U.S. representatives at the meeting, requested U.S. capacity-building assistance. African nuclear regulators, according to Elegba, are

particularly interested in strengthening their regulatory framework and enhancing the technical capacity of their personnel to conduct feasibility studies, site assessments, licensing, and the inspection of nuclear power plant projects. He added that the NRC is considering including two designees from FORBIA member states to participate in a U.S.-sponsored training workshop to be held in Vietnam in the summer of 2009.

¶5. (U) Elegba also reported that the NNRA, in collaboration with the U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), will hold a radiation detection and recovery training for its employees in October (date yet to be determined) under the latter's Global Threat Reduction Search and Secure Project. (Note: A similar training was conducted in November 2008, at the conclusion of which the NNRA received U.S. radiation detection equipment worth \$100,000. End Note).

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Comment

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¶6. (SBU) The NNRA is one of the oldest nuclear regulatory bodies in Africa (established in 2001) and is an active participant in discussions at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and regional forums. The election of the NNRA's Chief Executive as the first chairman of the continental body FORBIA is testimony to Nigeria's interest and activities in this field. The U.S. Mission recommends continued U.S. collaboration with the NNRA and believes such engagement will have broader impact beyond Nigeria.

¶7. (U) This cable has been coordinated with Consulate Lagos.

SANDERS